



Preserving America's Heritage

HIGHLIGHTS
ACHP BUSINESS MEETING
July 18, 2013
Washington, D.C.

The ACHP's summer business meeting began with the swearing in of the newest Presidential appointee, Suquamish Tribe Chairman Leonard Forsman as the Indian tribe/Native Hawaiian organization member on the ACHP. ACHP Chairman Wayne Donaldson also welcomed Janine Ledford to the meeting. She is the new chairperson of the National Association of Tribal Historic Preservation Officers.

The ACHP received the final poster from the Marine Corps from its "Defending Our Cultural Heritage" poster series, which celebrates the iconic places under the stewardship of the Corps. Mr. David Clifton, Deputy Commander, Marine Corps Installations Command presented the posters, along with Dr. Sue Goodfellow, Head of Planning and Conservation Section; and Captain Pat Garin.

The Chairman's Award for Achievement in Historic Preservation was presented to the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development, Middle Way House, and its New Wings Community Partnership for the rehabilitation of a former Coca-Cola bottling plant in Bloomington, Indiana. The building is now the home of Middle Way's headquarters, crisis intervention services, an emergency shelter for victims of domestic and other abuse, personal and legal advocacy programs, child care, affordable housing, and a commercial kitchen business.

Chairman Wayne Donaldson reported on recent activities. On June 26, 2013, President Obama signed an executive order establishing the White House Council on Native American Affairs, and the ACHP was named to it. Interior Secretary Sally Jewell will chair the council. The purpose of the council is to coordinate development of policy recommendations to support tribal self-governance, improve the quality of life for Native Americans, and to coordinate the U.S. government's engagement with tribal governments and their communities.

The ACHP was invited to post a blog entry about the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples on the White House Web site: President Obama and the Native American Community. Outreach about the ACHP's plan included an article in a Native Hawaiian newspaper. There is a new section on the ACHP Web site devoted to the Declaration.

The working group on the Sacred Sites Memorandum of Understanding, chaired by the ACHP, has launched its policy evaluation to be presented to tribal leaders at this year's White House Tribal Nations Conference, scheduled for December.

Chairman Donaldson, along with the leadership of major national preservation organizations, met with Secretary of the Interior Sally Jewell. The introductory meeting was productive and confirmed the Secretary's interest in and support for historic preservation.

ADVISORY COUNCIL ON HISTORIC PRESERVATION

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Executive Director John Fowler discussed the budget highlights and introduced new staff members including new ACHP interns and the FEMA detailee. Mr. Fowler gave an overview presentation of the National Building Museum—the ACHP’s new headquarters starting in the winter of 2014.

Alumni Foundation President Katherine Slick reported on activities of the Foundation, noting Foundation support for ACHP interns and recent travel related to the Preserve America program. She invited members to propose future opportunities for collaboration and support.

Council members discussed the ACHP’s initiative to build a more inclusive preservation program. Members noted inclusion is complicated and presents challenges but is nonetheless an important effort for the national historic preservation program. The steering committee met via conference call earlier in the month and decided to develop a policy statement that encourages the engagement of diverse constituencies in all aspects of the program. The statement would be designed to distribute to federal agencies and other participants in the national historic preservation program and possibly be the basis for a presidential memorandum or proclamation.

Vice Chairman Clement Price reported on the Civil War to Civil Rights collaborative and an initial project which Rutgers University will lead. It will involve students in Newark, New Jersey, doing interactive research and projects about historic places in their community related to the evolution of the Civil Rights movement.

Preservation Initiatives Committee Chairman Brad White opened a discussion based on the Preserve America Forum that took place the previous day and noted the panelists helped him and others evolve their thinking about the Preserve America program and its benefits. He outlined some key points that were made by presenters at the Forum. Among other things, these included the value of national recognition to encourage and support local communities and organizations for their efforts, the importance of seed money and technical assistance, and the desire of local governments and non-profit organizations to learn from their peers. Mr. White concluded by listing some follow-up steps that the ACHP and others could take to continue and re-invigorate the Preserve America program.

In a related effort, Dr. Price made a motion to authorize the chairman and the staff to pursue a presidential heritage awards initiative with the Department of the Interior and the Council on Environmental Quality with the goal of re-establishing the program. It passed unanimously.

There was discussion about the celebration of the 50th anniversary of the NHPA. Mr. White indicated that recent conversations among preservation partners on this topic have highlighted the need to have a celebration for the preservation community, but perhaps more important to use the anniversary to spur greater public awareness of preservation and history while also developing and carrying out a policy agenda focused on the future of preservation. Dr. Price suggested crafting an op-ed about what was going on 50 years ago in the context of that decade and why Congress created the NHPA in the midst of urban renewal, interstate highway construction, and other major changes that were taking place in American cities and countryside.

Cherilyn Widell and David Shiver, consultants to the Department of Defense, made a presentation on their study on sustainability and DoD’s historic pre-World War II masonry buildings. The study concluded that these buildings are valuable assets that can be modernized to match the energy performance of new buildings at significantly less cost than new construction. However, such benefits may be negated if antiterrorism/force protection and progressive collapse standards are applied in a rigid and prescriptive manner. The ensuing discussion led to agreement that the ACHP would meet with CEQ, DoD, GSA, and DOT to discuss future use of the report’s findings.

Federal Agency Programs Committee Chairman Stephen Ayers discussed ACHP collaboration with the Federal Real Property Council. He suggested that agencies ensure Senior Policy Officials are part of the discussion in their agencies about incorporating historic preservation goals and requirements into agency strategic plans and property disposal plans. He said the FAP Committee heard from the FCC and representatives of the Association of American Railroads on their efforts to develop a Positive Train Control system in compliance with the requirements of the Rail Safety Improvement Act of 2008. A program comment that lays out a strategy for considering the effect of this program, which includes the build out of some 22,000 communication towers along railroads, will likely be requested of the ACHP by FCC, and members will be asked to vote on it prior to the next business meeting.

Chairman Donaldson reported on the response of the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission to the ACHP's comments on proposed alterations to the historic Pawtucket Dam at Lowell National Historical Park in Massachusetts. In essence, FERC rejected the ACHP's comments, and the ACHP is considering supplementing the record with clarification of the comments the ACHP previously provided to FERC.

The next business meeting will be November 13-14 in Washington, D.C.